Drupal 7 -> 8 Migration

Site Assessment:

Based on the answers received for the questions, the site in review will benefit from Drupal upgrade Process rather than recreating the site from scratch and then Migrating the content over. In this document we will focus on the easier, cheaper approach of upgrade path but we will like to point out the following:

- If the design refresh is significant and changes the content strategy considerably then the second approach will make more sense i.e. re-do the content model and migrate the content over.
- Any Design refresh will result in purging of old views / blocks and creation of new views / blocks and in general new site building.

Having laid down above disclaimers we focus on upgrade path considering most of the content model remains same and only minimal site build will be needed to accommodate the design refresh. We give necessary details about things to consider in below sub headings.

Structural:

Current site-build structure (including content-types, field-types, taxonomy, blocks, views etc.) is assessed & documented. The document is reviewed & marked into stable upgrade paths, unstable upgrade path & custom migrations depending on the current state of Drupal 8 & upgrade path availability with contrib modules.

Modules:

Review all contrib & custom modules present in the codebase & mark them as stable in Drupal 8, Needs Port & re-architect using Drupal 8 core.

Migrate content structures & content (using Migrate Drupal in core)

Drupal 8 core provides us with **Migrate Drupal** module built on top of Migrate framework. This will take care of migrating both structure as well as content for most of the entities: Block, Node, Taxonomy, Users, File, Fields, Comments etc.

Caveats: If the website is using media module for media management, it will need to be migrated separately. Couple of edge cases encountered in the past where images get migrated, but don't get attached to the node need to be handled separately.

Handling conflicts around content Ids

Migrate Drupal migrates the content with the same IDs as in the Drupal 7 version. If the migration is being performed on an empty Drupal 8 site, the migration is smoother. In the past, we have seen issues where a contrib module adds data to the site & while migration we run into conflicting content Ids.

Custom migration for media entity

Image & file field migrations are supported out of the box by Migrate Drupal module. However, sites using media entity need additional work around migration. Media module provides an upgrade path to handle, but needs to be invoked separately.

Custom Migrations for any custom field

Based on the past experience, sites introducing use of a custom field are not supported by Drupal 8 upgrade path. Custom approach around migration needs to be taken to migrate content for these fields.

In such cases, module code needs to be ported to Drupal 8 along with migration plugin for handling data migration.

Custom migrations for paragraphs, Beans, metatags

Custom migration handling needs to be added to migrate content for paragraphs & beans module, if used on Drupal 7 site. The structure for them needs to be recreated manually/programmatically.

Re-creating Views

Views don't get migrated with Drupal core upgrade. They either need to be re-created manually or migrated using the experimental contrib module:https://www.drupal.org/project/view_migration. Please note that we might need to create new views in case the Design refresh demands that and if the view was not present in the old site.

Porting Necessary contrib modules to Drupal 8

With past projects we have seen multiple contrib modules getting dropped off while migrating from Drupal 7 to Drupal 8 that is features that can be built using features provided by Drupal 8 core. Though Drupal 8 Module porting status is pretty great at this moment, there might be one off cases that a module is not ported to Drupal 8 and is critical for the project in which case we would need to port the module to Drupal 8, this can be discovered in audit and a discussion can be done if the associated feature on site really necessary

Porting custom modules to Drupal 8

As a standard practice the audit of the site collects data about the custom modules in use on the site. This data is reviewed for possibilities around skipping the need for the custom module. The left over modules are re-architected in Drupal 8 way & re-written.

Specific considerations for a Multilingual site

Additional module migrate_drupal_multilingual is available that can be leveraged to handle migrations from i18n module to Drupal 8 core translation framework. The module however is in an experimental stage & not stable. Edge cases need to be handled manually.

This also becomes a problem if Drupal 7 site is using a mix of content translation & entity translation. The process is simpler if Drupal 7 site uses Entity translation.

Specific considerations for moving from workbench moderation to content moderation in core

Even though content moderation module has been moved into Drupal core, there is no stable path to upgrade from workbench moderation to content moderation. Support from patches/contrib modules need to be taken to be able to move content with the right workflow states.

Tests to cover Migration(optional)

We often write tests before starting the migration work to test the features on Drupal 7 site. The same automated tests are run post migration to ensure the upgrade didn't break any critical feature on the site. Content migration automation covers the automated test for the content that has been migrated to Drupal 8 making it possible to

Conclusion:

Upgrade path for Drupal makes most sense where we have lesser customizations & we are sure of Drupal 7 build to be using best practices. In cases, where the content architecture needs to be re-done, its best to go ahead with custom migration based on Migrate Framework.